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ABSTRACT

Describing a proposal for a new course entitled "Women in History" designed for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students, this course addresses the issues of attitudes toward women, the image that women may have of themselves, and the roles that men have assigned to women and considers that the deep-rooted attitudes, images, and stereotypes are determined by historical precedent. The content and instructional methods are devised for identification and testing of the learner's own presuppositions, values, and attitudes regarding the place of women in society. Course objectives, requirements, an evaluation process, meetings, and materials are covered. A tentative course outline and bibliography are included. (KWL)

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WOMEN IN HISTORY:

A PROPOSAL FOR A COURSE WITH A NEW DIRECTION

by

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ABSTRACT

This proposal describes a new course, Women in History (History 357), designed for upper-level undergraduate and, possibly, graduate students. Women in History is designed to develop a greater awareness of a contemporary problem; more importantly, it is designed to afford students the opportunity to discover and to test their own assumptions regarding the place of women in society. In the process the students will become more aware of their own values.

The course is open-ended in the sense that its outcomes are unpredictable, since the individual insights gained during the course will differ from student to student. Class discussion will give opportunity for sharpening and refining these individual insights. The course offers a creative alternative to pre-packaged content and procedures and to pre-set outcomes.

Students will meet twice-weekly to discuss women chosen by the teachers (2) and by the students. These discussions will constitute the heart of the course. The teachers will supply the necessary historical background and research assistance. The students will be expected to research each woman studied and to do required readings from the text as preparation for these twice-weekly sessions. Each student will be required to write a paper on a woman he/she chooses; this paper will serve as a focus for further discussion.

There will be at least two written tests, the nature of which will reflect the course objectives described above. There will also be an evaluation of course and faculty as is required of each University course.

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: WOMEN IN HISTORY: A PROPOSAL FOR A COURSE WITH A NEW
DIRECTION

1. Title of Course

The course is entitled Women in History--History 357. It is designed as an upper-division general education course, answering general education requirements and providing an elective for history and non-history majors. It may be taken on the graduate level where students would be required to demonstrate graduate-level competency in research, writing, and class participation.

The course was taught initially on an experimental basis in the spring semester of the 1984-1985 academic year. Eleven students participated. The course was team-taught by two professors whose fields are European and American history respectively. Both professors attended all classes and participated in the learning experience. The response encouraged the professors to incorporate the course, with modifications, into the formal history curriculum with full faculty approval.

2. Teaching-Learning Problems which the Proposal Addresses

Deep-rooted attitudes, images, and stereotypes are determined by history. This is especially true of attitudes toward women, the image that women may have of themselves, and the roles that men have assigned to women.

Courses in history of women, blacks, or native Americans have grown out of movements whose principal goals are to break stereotypes and change attitudes. The content, and more importantly, the outcomes of such courses are, therefore, often determined by the movements themselves.

Most courses are prepackaged in their content and procedures and are set in their outcomes. The content and method are usually determined by the outcomes set by the teacher. If the outcomes are value-laden, as they must be in the

humanities and social sciences, they are inevitably informed by the values of the teacher. Seldom is content and method devised for identification and testing of the learner's own presuppositions, values, and attitudes. This course is designed to achieve precisely that.

3. Specific Objectives

This course is open-ended in the sense that outcomes are unpredictable. The outcomes are unpredictable since the values and insights derived from reading, reflection, and discussion are themselves unpredictable. While it is hoped that a clarification and enhancement of concepts and attitudes may result, this is not assured, much less demanded. What is demanded is the identification of the learner's own attitudes and values and a testing of them. This identification and testing is to be achieved through the interplay in discussion of the insights and attitudes of others evoked by the historical matter chosen partly by the teachers and partly by the learners.

4. Methodology for Accomplishing Objectives

The text selected, The Great Women: The Inspiring Stories of Sixty Outstanding Women of All Ages and Nations by Joan Marlow (New York: Galahad Books, 1979), was chosen as a springboard for discussion and research because of the wide spectrum it presents of women from "all ages and nations." A list of women to be given particular emphasis will be provided by the two professors. The list follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Cleopatra | 9. Victoria Woodhull |
| 2. Joan of Arc | 10. Eleanor Roosevelt |
| 3. Elizabeth I | 11. Dorothy Day |
| 4. Anna Van Schurman | 12. Marilyn Monroe |
| 5. Catherine Spalding | 13. Betty Friedan |
| 6. Dorothea Dix | 14. Indira Gandhi |
| 7. George Eliot | 15. Coretta King |
| 8. Elizabeth Cady Stanton | |

For the most part, the list includes women notable in history about whom there are decided opinions (Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, and Eleanor Roosevelt). The list, however, also includes women less-known but significant because they illustrate particular facets of the role of women in society (Anna Van Schurman, Catherine Spalding, and Victoria Woodhull).

The students will be expected to research each woman studied and to read assigned pages from the text. The students will choose one other woman about whom they will do research; they will then present a paper on the role of that woman for class discussion. These papers will be given an early April due date and then placed on file for study by the rest of the class. Class members will be encouraged to do additional research so that they may challenge or add to the ideas presented in the papers. Efforts will be made to insure that these student choices represent a wide spectrum; students will be required to provide a rationale for their choices.

5. Evaluation Process

Written examinations will provide the students with the opportunity not only to compare and contrast the women studied, but also to show which women have made the greatest impression on them in terms of enhancing or modifying attitudes. There also will be assessment of students' involvement in the dynamics of the exchange of ideas.

Class discussion will focus on the women presented by the faculty, the women included in the text, and the women chosen by the students for individual research. (These last may be women included in the text.)

In addition, each student will complete an evaluation of the course and of the teachers, as is required in every Spalding University course.

6. Technology to be Utilized

Spalding University Media Center can provide equipment such as films and slide projectors, videotape camers, record players, etc., that professors and students may need in presenting their research.

7. Cost of Implementation

Since the course will be considered as part of the regular faculty teaching load, no additional salaries will be required. There will be incidental charges for handouts and for videotapes where needed. Metroversity libraries will provide most of the resources required.

8. Additional Details

A. Faculty: The faculty presenting this course, tentatively scheduled for the Fall Semester (1987-1988) are

1. Dr. Anna Marie Rhodes, S.C.N.,
Associate Professor of History
2. Dr. Thomas Spalding, C.F.X.
Associate Professor of History

B. Students: Students will be usually junior and senior undergraduates who elect the course out of interest or in order to fill requirements in general education or as part of a major or minor program. As has been noted, the course may be taken for graduate credit; in this case, graduate level competency must be demonstrated.

C. Tentative Outline: The students will determine the questions to be raised and researched.

Week One to Week Seven. Following the introductory material, the class will discuss Cleopatra, Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I, Anna Van Schurman, Catherine Spalding, Dorothy Dix, George Eliot, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Victoria Woodhull, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The teachers will supply some historical background for each period; the students will continue to add to this background as they research.

S ? or is this Miss Leak ?
Week Seven. There will be a written text in compliance with the stated course objectives.

Week Eight to Week Twelve. The students will discuss Dorothy Day, Marilyn Monroe, Betty Friedan, Indira Gandhi, and Coretta King; the faculty will again supply historical background as needed.

Week Twelve to Week Fifteen. Papers will be discussed with challenges and further research^{ed} by the class. (Discussion of papers may take more or less time than here allotted. Class size will determine whether changes must be made here.)

Week Fifteen. Final Written Examination.

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